

The Federal Republic of Germany**- Answer to the Guiding Questions for Defining the Normative Content of the Issues Examined at the Tenth Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group: Education, Training Life-long Learning, and Capacity building****Preliminary remark from Germany:**

With reference to the results of the X. Working Session of the OEWGA of April 2019, we are submitting the following positions on the strengthening of the rights of older persons.

By sharing the documents on the sets of topics referred to, Germany is seeking to make another constructive contribution to advancing the substantive, open debate on the strengthening of the rights of older persons. Germany does not want to give the impression of seeking a binding, normative regulation on the UN level. Instead, the following just sets out the aspects that, in Germany's view, should guide the substantive debate.

Definition

1. What are the definitions of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building in the national legislation in your country? Or how should such a right be defined, considering existing national, regional and international legal framework?

Answer:

Germany is party to several international agreements and treaties that include relevant provisions, for instance Art. 13 of the UN Social Compact and Art. 24 of the UN CRPD. In Germany, these are considered as applicable federal law.

According to the Constitution, education policy in Germany is the responsibility of the individual Federal *Laender*. To enforce the right to education, in Germany school is compulsory.

Under the *Laender* laws on further training, it is mainly the task of the adult education colleges, in addition to other voluntary bodies, to ensure the basic provision of further training services in the field of general education, i.e. to ensure regular, comprehensive offerings that meet the most diverse societal requirements and individual needs.

Scope of the right

2. What are the key normative elements of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building, including such elements as availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability? Please provide references to existing standards where applicable.

Answer:

In addition, the Lisbon Ministerial Declaration in the framework of the UNECE 2017 strengthens the normative aspects of older persons' right to education by means of the demand set out in the Preamble (see also Preamble, point 15).

In the context of demographic change and population ageing, the right to education is not limited to children and young people and does not end with mid-adulthood or retirement. Since the 1980s, study programmes for senior citizens have become increasingly established in Germany.

State obligations

3. What are the measures that should be undertaken by the State to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building, regarding the normative elements as provided above?

Answer:

Germany (under the leadership of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth) held, from 2015 to 2017, the Round Table “Active Ageing - Managing Transitions” (RTAA) with experts from academia and practice. One major conclusion of the Round Table was that education was becoming increasingly important in a longevity society – particularly then also for older persons.

Life-long learning does not end with the 65th birthday or the end of one's working life, and is a major guarantor of active ageing and social participation.

Special considerations

4. What special measures and specific considerations should be considered in developing the normative content of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building?

Answer:

Already today, the prerequisite for social participation in the digital society is new media skills and literacy in the digital technologies. In the context of digital sovereignty, access to digital education becomes a must for an empowered and community-oriented life. It continues to be a central aspiration to also reach and animate senior citizens who have not been using digital media nor attended learning events.

Key improvement measures are: putting sufficient service structures in place at the various local levels; ensuring that flexible structures are established on the various local levels and affording the older persons active opportunities for participation and design.

5. How should the responsibilities of non-State parties such as private sector be defined in the context of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity- building?

Answer:

Faced with a progressive skills shortage, companies have the responsibility to address the loss of knowledge and skills by means of “smart” models. In addition to a life phase-oriented personnel

policy – including a work-life choice – and more flexible working arrangements before and after the statutory retirement age, as elements of a modern personnel management, courses such as “further training for transition that prepare for post-retirement life can promote the life-long learning and upskilling of older persons.

Under the aspect of “education and digitalisation”, the inclusion of older persons as co-developers of information and communication technologies (ICT) as well as further training offers in the field is of fundamental importance. At the same time, system security must be guaranteed both in terms of operability and data safety, and fields of responsibility clearly defined.

Implementation

- 6. What are the best practices and main challenges faced by your country in the adoption and implementation of the normative framework on education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building for older persons?**

Answer:

As recommended by the Round Table Active Ageing (RTAA), the service centre “Digitalisation and Education for Older Persons” was set up at the Federal Association of Senior Citizens’ Organisations (BAGSO). Moreover, acting on another recommendation from the RTAA, the advisory council on “Digitalisation and Education for Older Persons” was established, which involves all of the relevant (civil) society actors in the further development of this field of action. The major priorities of the advisory council include the pooling of specialised expertise from politics, practice and academia for the benefit of this thematic field of action.